

The Vinton Chronicles

January/February 2010 Specials Edition
Volume 1, Issue 3

Principal James E. Palmer



*January 27, 1952
Annie E. Vinton
Elementary School Opens!*

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Upcoming Events

- ◆ Gr 4 Skating Field Trip
Jan 20th
- ◆ PTA Movie Night
Jan 22nd at 6:30pm in the gym

A Message from the Principal

When I reflect upon my most treasured moments at Vinton School, I usually picture the times when the hallways are full of excitement due to a holiday concert or a grade four musical. Or, the day when shoeboxes magically turn into painted castles in the Art room. I think about the eager faces when the trestle tree begins to take shape in the gym or when our students buy and sell trinkets in a Mexican Mercado speaking only in Spanish. It delights me when even our oldest students tell me that their favorite part of the week is when a story is read to them in the Library. I enjoy the fact that Vinton students often tutor me when I need to learn a new computer or technology skill.

I continue to marvel at the Suzuki string concert no matter how many times I have heard "Twinkle Twinkle Little

Star." With this in mind, our January/February newsletter shines a spotlight on the programs we call "Specials."

We are very fortunate in this community to have such unwavering support for all areas of the curriculum and instructional programs. Mansfield children receive a strong academic instructional program enriched with countless opportunities in the Arts resulting in a well-balanced elementary education.

As your Principal, I do not take this support for granted and as a result offer my gratitude. Please enjoy this "Specials" edition of *The Vinton Chronicles*. Happy New Year!

Safety Reminder for Driving in School Parking Lot

During Arrival and Dismissal time, please do not drive past the parked school buses along the front driveway (their bus lights should be flashing).

It's also helpful when you arrive just before bus arrival that you are not parked directly in front of the school. This lane should remain open for buses. The critical times for these

driving/parking restrictions are in the mornings from 8:40am to 9:10am and afternoons from 3:20pm to 4:00pm.

So please, when you enter the school parking lot, slow down and refrain from pulling up in front of the school building. Together, we can all work to keep the kids safe! Thanks for cooperation!!

Kindergarten 2010-11 Registration . . . Already?

We are already gathering names of students eligible for Kindergarten for the 2010-2011 school year. If you have a child eligible for Kindergarten in the fall, please be sure the office is notified, (860-423-3086).

Perhaps you know of a family new to

our district? If so, please make them aware of our need to be notified. We will run ads regarding Kindergarten registration in *The Chronicle* on the last three Saturdays of January as well as Thursdays, January 21 and 28.

Thanks for your help!



Physical Education News

Mr. Kronisch

In December, we did a floor hockey unit until the winter vacation. This month we are combining with the music class to present a dance unit. The children will learn a variety of dance forms: multicultural folk dances, square and contra dances, free form dance, yoga dance, tango, the rumba, the fox trot, and the cha-cha.

Also, new this year, I would like to expose the students to some African dance forms. So parents, "If You Think You Can Dance" or if you always wanted to "Dance with the Stars," please make an effort to stop by and watch one of our dance lessons.

A reminder to the parents of fourth graders; we will be going on a field trip to the UCONN ice rink on Wednesday, January 20th. Parents are invited to watch or skate with us.

This trip is also attended by the fourth graders from Goodwin and Southeast elementary schools. It's a great opportunity for our students to interact with their future classmates at Mansfield Middle School.

Looking ahead, our classes will be learning about the game of basketball in the month of February followed by gymnastics and the trestle tree in March. The trestle tree helps to develop a child's motor skills, fitness and confidence.

The trestle tree takes up half of the gymnasium; the apparatus includes the balance beam, crossbars, climbing ropes and rope ladder. It's quite a sight seeing the students maneuver amongst all of the trestle tree components. If you'd like to see the kids in action, parents are invited to watch a class.



Suzuki Program

with Mrs. Boyer and Mrs. Vaughan

For over thirty years, the Suzuki Cello/Violin Program has been offered at Vinton School. And this school year has been busy since the start!

In November, we played a concert at the Juniper Hill Assisted Living Center. Fourth graders followed this performance by joining the Mansfield Middle School Orchestra at their

winter concert in December.

In January, all of the string students from Kindergarten through Grade 12 will play together in our annual String Fling Concert at the Mansfield Middle School. The students have been practicing hard to learn all of the music!

Proper Winter Weather Attire

Recess is held outside on most days unless weather conditions require that recess take place indoors (e.g. temperature below 20°F, wind chill, rain, icy conditions).

Appropriate winter wear includes: coat, hat, gloves or mittens, boots and snowpants. Upon occasion, for student comfort and safety, a student without sufficient attire will be asked to play on the recess blacktop.

Art Lines

Mr. Dieter

We are swinging into the New Year with vim and vigor, some times more vim than vigor... I hope that all ceramics projects made it home safely to the families of our first and second graders and Kindergarteners.

We will be exploring how artists use paper cutting and folding to create designs through January.

We will use the art and literature of Ezra Jack Keats' The Snowy Day and Tomie dePaola's Joe and the Snow. We will also be exploring how artists and illustrators represent animals in

winter. This will lead up to painting and clay projects that use animals as themes.

Grade three classes have started constructing castles from the boxes brought to the art room as we work to learn about designing three dimensional space and medieval times.

Grade Four boys and girls are putting the finishing touches on their character mugs. We will be smoothing and glazing them shortly to be displayed at the end of the month.

“Notes” from the Music Room**Ms. Frascarelli**

The **preschool and kindergarten** students have been getting acquainted with classroom instruments such as shakers, chime eggs, ‘waffle’ sticks, sandpaper blocks, tambourines, and sleigh bells. We explore the different sounds we can make and practice keeping the beat to music. Chants and fingerplays also help to reinforce beat and rhythm.

Movement songs such as *Walking Shoes*, *Hop Old Squirrel*, *Walk and Stop*, and *Elephants Have Wrinkles* help students to move their bodies to music as well as focus their listening skills so they know what to do next in the song. Singing with Arpeggio, Charlie, Annie, and Spike, the music room puppets, helps develop vocal skills and “find our singing voice.”

The **grade one** students have been continuing to develop their vocal skills including singing solos during songs in class. They have also been using classroom percussion instruments to practice keeping the beat and to create patterns of long and short sounds.

From there, they learned quarter notes and eighth notes (which we call ‘tah’ and ‘ti-ti’ when we recite rhythm patterns). They also have learned to write these notes using magnetic notes on the chalkboard and on small whiteboards with the music staff. Music is another kind of literacy we learn here at Vinton.

In **grade two**, we reviewed rhythm patterns using quarter notes, eighth notes, and quarter rests, and we learned about half notes (‘tah-ah’ as we say when we recite rhythms).

In addition, we expanded our knowledge of **solfege** (the use of syllables and hand signs for singing) from ‘sol’ and ‘mi’, to include ‘la’. These solfege syllables, with accompanying hand signs, help students to understand pitch, melodic movement and to sing in tune. They love to play a solfege game called ‘Solami’ and they keep beating me!

Lately, we’ve expanded on the concept of patterning in music to the larger form of musical pieces. Using letters, we’ve been identifying the pattern of musical ideas in a song or composition (e.g. ABA for a piece that starts and ends with the same musical material). We used scarves and movement to show the form of the *Waltz of the Flowers* from the *Nutcracker* in December.

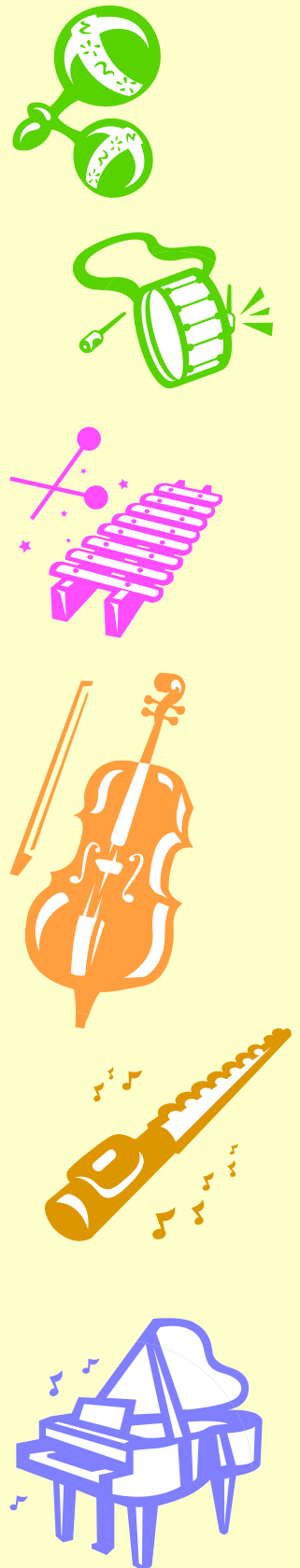
In **grade three**, we reviewed rhythm patterns using quarter notes, eighth notes, half notes, and quarter rests, and added half rests to our repertoire. In **solfege** (the use of syllables and hand signs for singing), we added ‘do’ and ‘re’. Grade three students have also been using their rhythm reading and solfege knowledge to play accompaniments to many of our songs on chimes and xylophones.

In addition, we have been working to improve part-singing skills through rounds and songs with **ostinatos** (a short melody or pattern that is constantly repeated). After our January dance unit, we will be working on learning to read the notes on the staff to prepare for learning to play the recorder.

The fourth grade students reviewed the notes on the staff and have added ‘c’ and ‘d’ below the staff as well. One of our goals at the elementary level is for all fourth grade students to be able to read notes with the treble clef so that they will be prepared for middle school music. Vinton students are already doing an excellent job with their note-reading!

They have also been working on improving singing skills, using **solfege** (we added ‘ti’ to our repertoire this fall), rounds, and partner songs. In addition, we learned a number of singing games - Obwisana, Sasa Akroma, Cobbler - that involved passing a stick or block in time to the music. These require coordination of singing, movement, and rhythmic skills that can be quite challenging.

(continued on Page 4)



Junior choir members are from grades 1 and 2.

Vinton singers are students from grades 3 and 4.

Participants in the choir rehearse during recess time.

Free Positive Parenting Course
being offered by
Natchaug Hospital

Jan 25th - March 8th

To receive more information and learn about how to register, contact Joe Freeman, LCSW at Natchaug at (860) 456-1311, ext. 337



Annie E. Vinton Elementary
306 Stafford Rd
Mansfield Center, CT 06250

Phone:
(860) 423-3086

We're on the Web!
mansfieldct.org/schools/vinton

“Notes” from the Music Room *continued from Page 3*

A number of students have been bringing their band and orchestra instruments to music class. It's really nice to see the progress they're making!

All grades worked hard to prepare the song for our Thanksgiving Feast (including sign language). It is one of my favorite moments of the school year when the entire school sings and signs *Thanksgiving Day* together.

The choirs practiced during October and November to learn holiday songs from around the world. Their performances on December 8th went well and showed how hard they worked.

This month music classes will be joining P.E. classes for a combined dance unit. We'll be sashaying, promenading, and reeling together in the gym to start the new year off right!

From the Pages of the Library

Mrs. Parda

January has arrived and we are wrapping up two programs in the library. Those who participated in Geno's Reading Program will have the opportunity to attend a “rally” at Gampel Pavilion and the 4th graders who have been reading the Nutmeg Nominee

books will be voting for their favorite during the third week of January. February will be spent concentrating on library skills so that we can have fun with **Read Across America** and Dr. Seuss in March! Be on the lookout for more details after February vacation!

Hola from Señora Zugarazo

Our second graders are busy learning about different action words or verbs. They have learned a fun song and will perform this at the next Celebrate Vinton. They are preparing to write a class book about things they like as well as things they like to do. Each page in the class book will be read by each student, then burned to CD. The book and CD will be available in the Library near the end of the month. Be on the look out.

Grade 3 students are off to Nicaragua! We are learning about different activities that kids do throughout their day and comparing that to what students do here in Mansfield.

Students are reviewing numbers now and will have their first piece of homework. They should practice the numbers each night for 5 minutes. This will help them with learning how to say the time in Spanish. This unit will end with a book that each child writes where they will compare and contrast

their daily schedules with that of a student in Nicaragua. We are also anxiously waiting to hear from our contact in Guatemala. She should be returning soon and students are very excited to hear about her trip and see pictures of the students. Thank you so much for all your generosity with all the items you sent in to send down with Stephanie. She was very grateful to be able to bring so much to help these women and children.

Our travels continue, with grade 4 students off to Ecuador now! Students are practicing the alphabet and spelling lots of vocabulary to each other. This is helping their writing tremendously as well as their pronunciation.

We will be creating Quipus soon, which are ancient record-keeping items. Students will practice their birthdays and ages in this unit as well as learn about the environment and geography of Ecuador and how that affects the music and instruments of Ecuador.